

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-05 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01

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R 251345Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7468

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

S E C R E T SANA 0679

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, YE

SUBJECT: YAR ARMS

REF: SANA 0540

SUMMARY: ASNAJ, IN UPBEAT MOOD, SAYS YARG LOOKS TO
SULTAN VISIT TO SETTLE SOME ARMS QUESTIONS.

1. YAR FONMIN ASNAJ TOLD CHARGE FEBRUARY 23 THAT
YEMENIS WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO SAUDI MINDEF PRINCE
SULTAN VISIT IN ABOUT MID-MARCH, HOPEFULLY TO "SIGN SOME
CONTRACTS" AND IN ANY CASE TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS RE:
YEMEN ARMS.

2. ASNAJ SAID FAHD HAD TOLD HAMDI, IN PRESENCE OF KHALID,
THAT ARMS MATTERS WOULD BE SETTLED WITHIN ONE MONTH
OF HAMDI VISIT ON HAJJ (IN DECEMBER). YEMENIS CLEARLY
UNDERSTOOD THAT CONTRACTS WOULD BE IN
SANAA BY NOW FOR SIGNING. ASNAJ SAID YARG
HAD NOT RPT NOT PRESSED SAUDIS ON THIS MATTER, AND
THUS HAVE STILL HEARD NOTHING ABOUT DETAILS

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OF ARMS PACKAGES AND SAUDI ESTIMATE OF WHEN STEPS

WOULD BE TAKEN.

3. ASNAJ, IN A VERY CONFIDENT AND EBULLIENT MOOD, SAID HE HAD EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT SAUDIS WOULD FULFILL THEIR MATERIAL AND POLITICAL PROMISES, AND EXPECTED THAT SULTAN, WHEN HE VISITED YEMEN IN MID-MARCH, WOULD BE PROVIDING DETAILS. ASNAJ SAID HE FELT SULTAN WOULD WANT TO SHOW RESULTS. YARG HAD THEREFORE NOT PRESSED ASNAJ OFFICIALS FOR MORE DETAILS, BUT HAD IT ON AGENDA TO DISCUSS WITH SULTAN.

4. ASNAJ SAID EVERYONE WORRIED ABOUT MIG-21S AND T-54S ON THE SOVIET SHIP WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN IN HODEIDA BUT THEY WERE "SITTING IN ADEN HARBOR". "SOVIETS ARE PULLING THE SAME THING THERE THEY TRIED HERE", SAID ASNAJ, "THIS IS THEIR FLOATING WISH SHIP." ASNAJ SAID HE WONDERED WHERE THE SOVIETS WOULDN'T UNLOAD IT NEXT.

5. I TOLD HIM SOVIET DIPLOMATS IN SANAA WERE SAYING THAT MIG-21S AND T-54'S HAD BEEN SOLD TO YEMEN. ASNAJ SMILED, AND SAID ALL YEMEN WAS GETTING WAS " OLD STUFF."

COMMENT: ASNAJ DIDN'T TALK TODAY ABOUT WESTERN "SETBACKS" AND SLOW SAUDI REACTIONS. HE WAS VERY UPBEAT. SEPTTEL REPORTS SEVERAL POLITICAL BREAKTHROUGHS WHICH PROBABLY CHEERED HIM, BUT ASNAJ IS ALSO CLEARLY KEYING ON SULTAN VISIT TO CARRY FORWARD RAPPROACHMENT WHICH SAUDIS SO ABLY BEGAN DURING HAJJ VISIT OF HAMDI TO KINGDOM. THERE IS STILL A BIG QUESTION IN OUR MINDS AS TO WHETHER ASNAJ KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT IS GOING ON IN ARMS FIELD BUT WE SHARE HIS HOPES THAT SAUDIS WILL PROVIDE MORE DETAILS AND MORE REASSURANCES DURING SULTAN VISIT.
RANSOM

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